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ABSTRACT

This document outlines an overall plan of action for improving school effectiveness in the Spencerport (New York) school system. This master plan (developed by a leadership planning team consisting of key personnel in the Spencerport system, in cooperation with the Institute of Research on Teaching, College of Education, Michigan State University) includes stated project goals for all school buildings, a list of instructional program priorities, definitions of key terms, a list of standards for monitoring the minimum academic mastery goal, a concomitant goal, a list of identified assumptions upon which effective schools/teaching rest, and a model for school change. This model recommends collecting needs assessment data from each school and forming individual building committees, who will be trained in group process skills, data analysis, and plans development. Each committee shall develop a plan for its building based upon needs assessment data, shall share this plan with the total faculty, shall establish regular opportunities for input and review, and shall prepare new plans for future years based upon an annual evaluation of the plan's implementation. The document concludes with a calendar timeline for followup action and a diagram illustrating the sequential phases of the entire project. (IW)

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MASTER PLAN

SPENCERPORT CENTRAL SCHOOLS

SPENCERPORT, NEW YORK

MORE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS/TEACHING PROJECT

REPORT OF THE LEADERSHIP PLANNING TEAM

TO THE

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

JUNE 13, 1983

EA 018 759

INTRODUCTION

In January, 1983 the Board of Education approved a project whereby the school district would investigate recent research on the characteristics of effective schools and of effective teaching. This project would be done in cooperation with the Institute of Research on Teaching, College of Education, Michigan State University.

One aspect of this project was the formation of a Leadership Planning Team consisting of key personnel from throughout the school system. Its purpose is "to develop a detailed plan of action for the entire school system. On the last day of the workshop, the team would present a proposed model which the Superintendent would either approve, accept in part, or reject. If the Superintendent either rejects the model or accepts it in part, the Team must revise it and present it again to the Superintendent for approval."

In order to fulfill its task, the Team met three times: March 28, 29, and April 19. The first two meetings were, in effect, an intensive seminar conducted by Dr. Ronald Edmonds and Dr. Larry Lezotte from Michigan State University. As a part of their presentation they gave the Team thirty-three articles to read. The April 19 meeting was a combination of further inservice education led by Drs. Lezotte and Edmonds, plus preliminary planning for this report.

In addition to the intensive seminar presented to the Leadership Planning Team, workshops of various intensity were conducted for principals, the Administrative Council, the Curriculum Council, the STAExecutive Commitee and the Board of Education. Further, a full-day workshop was held for all teachers and administrators in May, 1983.

This report then is presented to the Superintendent of Schools by the Leadership Planning Team to fulfill its responsibilities as outlined above.

LEADERSHIP PLANNING TEAM

1982-83

Bernabi		
John Berardicurti	Grade 5	Teacher Leader, Health
Tony Marcello	Grade 5	Team Leader
Munn		
Frank Cardella	Grade 1	Teacher Leader, Math
Sue LaManque	Grade 2	Teacher Leader, Soc. Studies
Town Line		
Jim Alexander	Grade 6	Teacher Leader, Science
Sally Henry	Grade 3	Teacher Leader, Math
Cosgrove		
Dick Anderson		Teacher Leader, Science
Terry Hedges		Teacher Leader, English
Bob Kincaid		Teacher Leader, Math
Wilson		
Milt Danko		Teacher Leader, Math
Joan Kuyon		Teacher Leader, Home Ec
Bob Nichol		Teacher Leader, Math
Bonnie Seaburn		Teacher Leader, Guidance
STA		
Deanna Lammes	Jr. High	Foreign Language
Building Administration		
Louise Sprecher		Principal, Bernabi School
Matt Natalie		Principal, Munn School
Milt Ryan		Principal, Town Line School
Manuel Panarites		Principal, Cosgrove Jr. High
Bill Selander		Principal, Wilson Sr. High
District Office		
Frank Ferris		Testing & Evaluation
Bob Sudlow		Curriculum & Instruction
Resource Personnel		
Ronald Edmonds		Michigan State University
Larry Lezotte		Michigan State University

PROJECT GOAL

We recommend that the following primary goal be adopted for each building (Bernabi, Munn, Town Line, Cosgrove and Wilson/Trowbridge) in the Spencerport Central School District:

The instructional program in each building shall be effective. Effective is defined as the combination of all of the following:

A. Ninety-five, or greater, percent of all the students at each grade level shall demonstrate minimum academic mastery. Children in Learning Disabilities classes shall be included in building analyses. The effect of the inclusion of the children on the total population shall be carefully monitored and analyzed.

B. There shall be no significant difference in the proportion of youth demonstrating minimum academic mastery as a function of socio-economic class.

C. The above two conditions shall have been obtained for a minimum of three consecutive years.

Should a school building not be effective according to the criteria of the Primary Goal (above) and its implementing Definitions (below) and Standards (below), then we recommend that the following definition of school improvement be used until the building attains effectiveness.

A. There shall be an annual increase in the proportion of students who demonstrate minimum academic mastery, and

B. There shall be an annual decrease in the proportion of youth demonstrating minimum academic mastery as a function of socio-economic class.

CONCOMITANT GOAL

Evaluations of ongoing school improvement projects shows that as overall achievement rises, outstanding individual achievement also rises. Therefore we recommend that the district monitor various indicators to see if the number of students with outstanding achievement rises. (It should be noted that the Leadership Planning Team strongly recommends that building plans center solely around achieving the Primary Goal.)

PRIORITIES

In order to emphasize that the instructional program is aimed primarily at the intellectual domain and in order to reemphasize the priorities that this school district cares most about, we recommend that the Board of Education reaffirm the rank order priority for the four basic purposes of education, namely:

A. Intellectual Dimension
B. Social Dimension
C. Personal Dimension
D. Productive Dimension

DEFINITIONS

In order to implement the Primary Goal, we recommend that the following definitions be approved:

A. Minimum Academic Mastery--Students who achieve this have been prepared so that they will be predictably successful in the next grade either in this or in any other school district throughout the nation. Minimum academic mastery shall be measured by performance on a standardized achievement (norm or criterion referenced) test. The cut-off point between minimum and unsuccessful academic mastery shall be established in advance.

B. Socio-economic class is determined by the number of years of formal education which the mother of a child has. If the level of the mother's formal education is not available, then the level of the father's formal education will be used. Should a child not be living with his or her parents, then the number of years of formal education which the female (or the male) has in the household in which the child is residing shall be used.

STANDARDS FOR MONITORING THE MINIMUM ACADEMIC MASTERY GOAL

Because the district is for the first time administering in May, 1983 the 1982 editions of the Stanford Achievement Test, there is no local trend line data upon which to base the following recommendation. Accordingly the perceptions of the Leadership Planning Team, reading directors and of educational researchers in Monroe County were sought regarding which percentile would indicate acquisition of enough skills so that a student would do well in the next grade level. Also, student performance on several related standardized tests were examined. It was found that:

A. Approximately sixteen percent of the students in 1980-81 in grades 1-12 who took the Iowa Silent Reading Test or the Metropolitan Achievement Test in reading scored below the 40th percentile. In 1981-82 it was ten percent.

B. Approximately twenty-two percent of the tenth graders who took the Stanford Achievement Test in reading October, 1982 scored below the 40th percentile.

Accordingly the Team recommends that for grades K-8, minimum academic mastery shall be set at the fortieth percentile, that is stanine five, on the Stanford Achievement Test. Since the fortieth percentile is an interim cut-off point, it will be reexamined in 1983-84.

The specific tests to be used and the cut-off points for each are listed below.

1. For grades 1-6: Reading Comprehension and Total Math Scores--40th percentile.
2. For grades 7-8:
   a. Seventh grade--reading comprehension, language, total listening, total math--40th percentile.
   b. Eighth grade
      (1) Reading comprehension, total math, total listening, language, science, social studies--40th percentile.
      (2) New York State Preliminary Competency Test in Writing--Statewide Reference Point.
3. For grades 9-12:
   a. Areas in which 100% of all of the students at a grade level take a test.
      (1) Ninth grade math
         (a) Math 9 Regents Exam--65%
         (b) Math 10 Regents Exam--65%
         (c) New York State Math Regents Competency Test--65%
      (2) Tenth Grade
         Stanford Task II Test
         (a) October 1982 - total reading--40th percentile.
         (b) Starting October 1983 - total reading and total math--40th percentile.

(3) Eleventh Grade English

(a) Comprehensive English Regents Exam--65%

(b) Reading Regents Competency Test--Statewide Reference Point

(c) Writing Regents Competency Test--65%

STANDARDS FOR MONITORING THE CONCOMITANT GOAL

The team recommends the following standards:

1. There shall be an annual evaluation of the percentage of students demonstrating superior academic mastery as demonstrated either by scoring in stanines seven, eight and nine on the Stanford Achievement Test or by scoring at or above 90% on a Regents exam.
2. For those subjects in which a significant percentage of the students take a Regents exam:
   a. A score of 65% or better
   b. An annual increase in the percentage of students taking the exam.

ASSUMPTIONS

The effective schools/teaching literature and/or the district's consultants have identified a number of assumptions upon which effective schools/teaching rest. In order for the Spencerport project to be successful, these assumptions need to be identified and accepted as a formal part of this project. We recommend that the following assumptions be approved:

1. Virtually all students are educable when educability is defined as pupil acquisition of basic school skills.
2. Research concludes that the school effects are more powerful than familial effects. This conclusion must not be taken to mean that there is no familial effect in pupil acquisition of academic skills. In some families, background does not limit a student's ability to acquire basic school skills: but some families can enhance student achievement well beyond basic school skills.

3. a. Annually the goal of education for each youth is to bring him or her to at least the standard of minimum academic performance for that grade level so that he or she can perform successfully in the next grade level.
   b. Further, the goal of education is to prepare students so that they can make as many choices as possible. Thus upon graduation from high school all students should be able, as a result of their education, to choose whether or not to enter college, or to attend another form of post high school education, or to obtain a job.
4. There is a positive correlation between academic student achievement and staff expectations.
5. An emphasis upon learning, upon academic achievement, is the prime purpose of public education.
6. Teachers and principals can and do make a key difference in the quality of education each child receives.
7. A school building is a complex social system with a set of norms, beliefs and patterns of behavior which can facilitate or hinder learning.
8. Collaborative, cooperative, collegial, supportive, non-coercive planning especially at the building level and accompanied by support from District Office personnel is the key approach to improvement.
9. The building principal has a key role in establishing the climate of his or her building.
10. Change is a process, a series of related events. It is not one event.
11. Ideal change fosters ownership and commitment by all participants.
12. In many ways, the schools in this district are effective. The challenge is to make them more effective.
13. This project affects all school personnel.

14. Because the climate of a school is dependent upon all of its occupants, the individual school building as a whole is the strategic unit for planned change. To obtain change, attention must be paid to the culture of the school; focusing on the behavior of individual teachers or students is not sufficient.
15. Focusing on effective schools research may necessitate realignment of other priorities within the building.

CHANGE MODEL

So that each school building can efficiently and effectively study itself and, if needed, make appropriate changes, we recommend that the following model be used:

I. School Building Needs Assessment
   A. Achievement Profile--A disaggregate analysis shall be done for each subject identified in "Standards for Monitoring the Minimum Academic Mastery Goal" above. A disaggregate analysis is a comparison of the percent of students from the lower socio-economic class who score at or below the minimum standard for academic mastery.
   B. School Profile--The results of the Connecticut Instrument which were given to all teachers, principals and assistant principals on May 20, 1983.

II. School Planning Committee
   A. A Planning Committee shall be formed in each building. It shall be broadly representative of the total faculty. It shall consist of the building principal, the current members of the Leadership Planning Team from that building, and:
      1. K-6 -- two additional teachers
      2. 7-8 -- two additional teachers and an assistant principal
      3. 9-12 -- one additional teacher and an assistant principal

B. The functions of the School Planning Committee shall

1. To develop a plan for the building based upon the needs assessment data. This plan shall emphasize strengths and areas of needed improvement.
2. To identify and agree upon the most important needs and subsequent objectives.
3. a. To develop an appropriate written plan of action for the school year unique to the school's needs.
   b. Insofar as possible this plan shall be based upon programs and/or practices which current research literature has shown to be effective; namely, they produce increases in student achievement.
   c. To have available support consulting assistance and specific journals, models and examples of strategies which work.
4. To share this plan of action with the total faculty on September 7, 1983 for the purposes of study, discussion and change before adopting a final plan of action by October 1, 1983. In order to properly do this, the Team recommends that there be a half-day of school on September 7, 1983.
5. To establish specific vehicles for both formal and informal ongoing communication with the faculty so that its deliberations are, and are perceived as, open.
6. To establish regular opportunities for input and review throughout the school year.
7. To meet periodically throughout the year to monitor and to facilitate the implementation of the plan.
8. To prepare a new plan for the second and future years based upon the annual evaluation of the building plan.

III. School Building Plan

A. We recommend:

1. That each Building Planning Committee meet this summer and develop a prioritized draft plan to present to the faculty upon the opening of school.
2. That as soon as the draft plan is written this summer that it be sent to Drs. Lezotte and Edmonds for review.
3. That after the faculty has had an opportunity to review the draft plan and suggest changes, the subsequent draft be sent to Drs. Edmonds and Lezotte for review.
4. Then the School Planning Committee shall officially approve the plan for 1983-84 and forward it to the Superintendent of Schools for final review and approval. This must be forwarded to the Superintendent by no later than October 1, 1983.

B. Any plan of action developed to become an effective school shall seek to modify only those things which are under the control of the building.

IV. Implementation of the Plan

This shall consist of steps 5, 6 and 7 under item II. B. immediately above, plus other appropriate activities.

V. On-Going Pupil Assessment

Specific procedures shall be established by the principal and faculty to monitor throughout the year the academic progress of students.

VI. Annual Evaluation

This shall consist first and primarily of the computation of a new disaggregate analysis of academic achievement, second of a readministration of the Connecticut Survey Instrument, and third of other appropriate activities. The School Planning Team shall develop a written evaluation report identifying needs, strengths and areas of improvement.

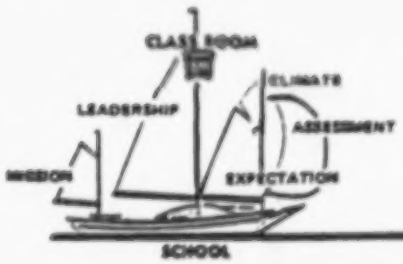
VII. The Next Year

Using the Annual Evaluation Report, the School Planning Committee shall develop a plan of action for the coming year using the same procedures and processes as it used for the current year.

CONCLUSION

For 1983-84 the District's Leadership Planning Team recommends:

1. That each school building develop and implement a plan of action. Note: Should the disaggregate analysis show that a school building is effective, this recommendation shall not apply.
2. That funds be provided for each Building Planning Team to meet this summer.
3. That there be a half day of school on September 8, 1983 for each Building Planning Team to present its preliminary plan to the faculty.
4. That once finally approved by the Superintendent of Schools, the individual school plans be implemented.
5. That funds be provided for Drs. Lezotte and Edmonds to meet and work with the Leadership Planning Team for one day in October and May, for two other days, if needed, and for periodic written and telephone consultations throughout the year.
6. That plans for the March Superintendent's Conference Day not be made until January, 1984. By that time the Leadership Planning Team will be in a better position to recommend whether all, some, or none of the day should be devoted to the More Effective Schools/Teaching Project.
7. That all of the recommendations in the preceding sections of this report be approved.
8. That necessary resources be provided in order to help buildings implement their plans.



MORE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS/ TEACHING PROJECT

Awareness
- Building Faculties
- Key Leadership Groups

Inservice
- Principals and Assistant Principals
- Leadership Planning Team

Development of Master Plan

Approval by:
- Superintendent
- Board of Education

Formation of Building Planning Teams

Training of Building Planning Teams
- Group Process Skills
- How to Analyze Data
- How to Develop a Plan

Initial Needs Assessment
- Disaggregated Analysis
- Presence of correlates (Connecticut School Interview)

Data Analysis
- First year by Edmonds & Lezotte
- Subsequent years by Building Planning Teams

Preparation of Draft Plan by Building Planning Team

Review and Endorsement by Faculty

Review and Approval by Superintendent

Implementation by the Faculty

Continued Support and Encouragement from District Office

Evaluation
- Disaggregated Analysis
- Presence of Correlates